

To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;
Al his werkynge nas but fraude and deceit.
Sire preest, he seyde, I kepe han no loos
Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;
And, as ye love me, kepeth it secrete;
for, and men knewen al my subtiltee,
By God, they wolden han so greet envye
To me, bycause of my philosophye,
I sholde be deed, ther were noon oother weye.
God it forbede! quod the preest; what sey ye?
Yet hadde I levere spenden al the good
Which that I have, or elles were I wood!
Than that ye sholden falle in swiche mescheef.
for youre good wyl, sire, have ye right good
preef,
Quod the chanoun, and farwel, grant mercy!
He wente his wey, and never the preest hym sy
After that day; and whan that this preest
shoolde
Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde
Of this receit, farwel! it wolde nat be!
Lo, thus byjaped and bigiled was he!
Thus maketh he his introduccioun,
To brynge folk to hir destruccioun.
Considereth sires, how that in ech estaat,
Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat
So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon.
This multiplying blent so many oon,
That, in good feith, I trowe that it bee
The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.
Philosophres speken so mystily
In this craft, that men kan nat come therby,
for any wit that men han now adayes.
They mowe wel chiteren as that doon jayes,
And in hir termes sette hir lust and payne,
But to hir purpos shul they nevere atteyne.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
To multiplie, and brynge his good to naught!
Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,
A mannes myrthe it wol turne unto grame,
And empten also grete and hevy purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of hem that han hir good therto ylent.
O fy! for shame! they that han been brent,
Allas! kan they nat flee the fires beete?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it leete,
Lest ye lese al; for Bet than nevere is late.
Nevere to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it nevere fynde;
Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blynde,
That blondreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
He is as boold to renne agayn a stoon,
As for to goon besides in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
If that youre even kan nat seen aright,
Looke that youre mynde lakke noght his sight,
for though ye looke never so brode, and stare,
Ye shul nat wynne a myte on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fir, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth namoore with that art, I mene,

for, if ye doon, youre thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as swithe I wol yow tellen heere,
What philosophres seyn in this matere.
O, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencion;
He seith right thus, withouten any lye,
Ther may no man mercurie mortifie,
But it be with his brother knowlechyng.
O that he, which that first seyde this thyng,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragon, douteles,
Ne dyeth nat, but if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragon, Mercurie and noon oother,
He understood; and Brymston by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe.
And therefore, seyde he, taak heede to my sawe;
Lat no man bisye hym this art for to seeche,
But if that he thentencioun and speche
Of philosophres understonde kan;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
for this sciencie and this konnyng, quod he,
Is of the secrete of secretes, pardee.
Also ther was a disciple of Plato
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witness,
And this was his demande, in soothfastnesse:
Telle me the name of the privee stoon.
And Plato answerde unto hym anon,
Take the stoon that Titanos men name,
Which is that? quod he. Magnesia is the
same,
Seyde Plato. Ye, sire, and is it thus?
This is ignotum per ignotius.
What is Magnesia, good sire, I yow preye?
It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes four, quod Plato.
Telle me the roote, good sire, quod he tho,
Of that water, if that it be youre wille.
Nay, nay, quod Plato, certein that I nylle.
The philosophres sworn were everychoon
That they sholden discovere it unto noon,
Ne in no book it write in no manere;
for unto Crist it is so lief and deere,
That he wol nat that it discovered bee,
But where it liketh to his deitee
Man for tenspire, and eek for to defende
Whom that hym liketh; lo, this is the ende.
Hanne conclude I thus, sith God of
hevene
Ne wil nat that the philosophres nevene
How that a man shal come unto this stoon,
I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon.
for whoso maketh God his adversarie,
As for to werken anythyng in contrarie
Of his wil, certes never shal he thryve,
Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyve.
And there a poynt; for ended is my tale;
God sende every trewe man boote of his bale!
Amen.

Heere is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

Heere folweth the prologe of the Maunciples Tale.
ITE ye nat where ther
stant a litel toun
Which that ycleped is
Bobbe up and down,
Under the Blee, in Caun-
terbury weye?
Ther gan oure Hooste for
to jape and pleye,
And seyde, Sires, what!
Dun is in the Myre!
Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,
That wole awake oure felawe al bihynde?
A theef myghte hym ful lightly robbe and bynde.
See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes bones!
As he wol falle fro his hors atones.
Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?
Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce,
Do hym come forth, he knoweth his penaunce,
for he shal telle a tale, by my fey!
Although it be nat worth a botel hey.
Awake, thou cook, quod he, God yewe thee sorwe!
What cyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
Hastow had fleen al nyght, or artow dronke?
Or hastow with some quene al nyght yswonke,
So that thou mayst nat holden up thy heed?
This cook, that was ful pale and nothyng reed,
Seyde to oure Hoost, So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me swich hevynesse,
Noot I nat why, that me were levere slepe
Than the beste galon wyn in Chepe.
Wel, quod the maunciple, if it may doon ese
To thee, sire cook, and to no wight displese
Which that heere rideth in this compaignye,
And that oure Hoost wol, of his curteisye,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale,
for, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,
And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stynketh,
That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed;
Of me, certeyn, thou shal nat been yglosed.
See how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight!
As though he wolde swolwe us anonright.
Hoold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kyn!
The devel of helle sette his foot therin!
Thy cursed breeth infecte wole us alle;
fy, stynkyng swyn! fy, foule moote thee falle!
A! taketh heede, sires, of this lusty man.
Now, sweete sire, wol ye justen atte fan?
Cherto me thynketh ye been wel yshape!
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.
And with this speche the cook wex wrooth
and wraw,
And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste
for lakke of speche, and down the hors hym caste,
Wheras he lay, til that men up hym took;
This was a fair chyvachee of a cook!

Allas! he hadde holde hym by his ladel!
And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
Ther was greet showyng bothe to and fro,
To lifte hym up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweeldy was this sory palled goost;
And to the maunciple thanne spak oure Hoost:
Bycause drynke hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun,
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale,
for were it wyn, or oold or moysty ale,
That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
He hath also to do moore than ynough
To kepe hym and his capul out of slough;
And, if he falle from his capul eftsoone,
Thanne shul we alle have ynough to doone,
In lifyng up his hevy dronken cors;
Telle on thy tale, of hym make I no fors.
AT yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to nyce,
Thus openly repreve hym of his vice.
Another day he wole, peraventure,
Reclayme thee, and brynge thee to lure;
I mene, he speke wole of smale thynges,
As for to pynchen at thy rekenynges,
That were nat honeste, if it cam to preef.
No, quod the maunciple, that were a greet
mescheef!
So myghte he lightly brynge me in the snare.
Yet hadde I levere payen for the mare
Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve;
I wol nat wratthe hym, al so moot I thryve!
That that I spak, I seyde it in my bourde;
And wite ye what? I have heer, in a gourde,
A draughte of wyn, ye, of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
This cook shal drynke therof, if I may;
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay!
And certeynly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook drank faste, alas!
What neded hym? he drank ynough biforn.
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn,
To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn,
And of that drynke the cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked hym in swich wise as he koude.
Thanne gan oure Hoost to laughen wonder
loude,
And seyde, I se wel it is necessarie,
Where that we goon, good drynke we with us carie;
for that wol turne rancour and disese
Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
O thou Bachus! yblessed be thy name
That so kanst turnen earnest into game!
Worship and thank be to thy deitee!
Of that matere ye gete namoore of me.
Telle on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye.
Wel, sire, quod he, now herkneth what I seye.
Thus endeth the prologe of the Maunciple.